

JOURNAL
OF
SOUTH AFRICAN BOTANY
VOL. XIX.

A NEW ALOE FROM SOMALILAND
PROTECTORATE.

By G. W. REYNOLDS.

(With Plate XI.)

Aloe jucunda Reynolds. Species nova. Forsitan in Sect. EUALOE Subsect. *Parvae* pertinet; nulli alii arcte affinis; sectionem propriam constituere debet.

Planta parva, sobolifera, mox caespitosa.

Folia ca. 12, dense rosulata, ovato-acuminata, 4 cm. longa, 2.5 cm. lata, patentia vel apice recurvula, *supra* viridula, parce maculata; *subtus* convexa, maculis numerosis parvis picta; marginibus dentibus 2 mm. longis, 3—4 mm. distantibus armata.

Inflorescentia simplex, 33 cm. alta. *Racemus* 13 cm. longus, 5 cm. diam., sublate ca. 20-floribus. *Bractae* ovato-acutae, 5 mm. longae, 3 mm. latae, scariosae, 3-nervatae. *Pedicelli* 7 mm. longi. *Perigonium* roseum, cylindricum, 20 mm. longum; segmenta exteriora per 7 mm. libera. *Antherae* per 2 mm. exsertae. *Stigma* demum 2—3 mm. exserta. *Ovarium* 5 mm. longum, 2.5 mm. diam.

Hab. Somaliland Protectorate: Gaan Libah, ca. 9° 55'N 44° 18'E, coll. P. R. O. Bally, no. 7157, cult. Johannesburg, fl. 31 Jan. 1953, Reynolds 6223 (type) in Nat. Herb. Pretoria.

This charming and very distinctive little Aloe was collected by Mr. P. R. O. Bally, botanist at the Coryndon Museum, Nairobi, on 2nd May 1949, at Gaan Libah, Somaliland Protectorate.

This locality is at the western end of the Golis Range about 5 miles east of Mandera (which is on the Berbera-Hargeisa road), and about 25 miles west of Upper Sheik (on the Berbera-Burau road). Mr. Bally found numbers of plants forming large clumps, 1—2 ft. across, commonly

hidden in bushes in open places on the upper edge of a dry, windswept escarpment, flowering on 2nd May 1949.

A plant sent to Kew flowered there in May 1951, when the inflorescence was preserved in liquid, but no description was drawn up at the time. When Mr. Bally's plants flowered in Nairobi on 6th October 1951, he made an excellent life-size painting of a flowering plant and kindly sent the painting to me, together with two plants. These plants are now well established in Johannesburg, and when one of them flowered on 31st January 1953, photographs were taken, a full description drawn up, and the type material prepared for the National Herbarium, Pretoria.

A. jucunda is a most distinctive little species with rather squat, pale rose-pink flowers which, in shape and size, are allied to those of *A. mcloughlinii* Christian (see *Fl. Plants Afr.* 28: Pl. 1112 (1951)), but the latter, which comes from Direidawa in Eastern Ethiopia, is a considerably larger plant with a branched inflorescence, and entirely different leaves.

At a quick glance the clustered rosettes and leaves of *A. jucunda* bear a slight resemblance to those of *Haworthia tessellata*. The leaves of *A. jucunda* are flat at base with the marginal teeth more or less in the same plane, while in the upper two-thirds, the margins are somewhat involute with the marginal teeth more or less standing up at right angles to the median plane of the leaf.

When the Aloes of Tropical Africa have been more fully investigated, it is clear that affinities and groupings will have to be drastically revised. In the meantime, *A. jucunda* could be included under Berger's subsect. *Parvae*, merely on account of its size.

Description: Plant succulent, acaulescent or with very short stem, soboliferous, forming dense groups up to 50 cm. and more across, the rosettes averaging 8—9 cm. diam., with cylindric roots.

Leaves about 12, densely rosulate, broadly ovate-acuminate, spreading to recurved, 4 cm. long, 2·5 cm. broad at base, rather fleshy; *upper surface* dark green and flat low down, turning brownish and channelled in upper half, with numerous pale-green to dull-white spots throughout, the spots lenticular, sometimes confluent, smaller and more crowded low down, larger and fewer upwards; *lower surface* rounded, deep green, copiously spotted throughout, the spots smaller and much more numerous than on upper surface; *margins* armed with horny, reddish-brown, pungent, deltoid teeth up to 2 mm. long, 3—4 mm. distant, the interspaces rounded; the teeth smaller near base of leaf, largest near the middle and smaller towards apex, with a few minute spines dorsally in median line of leaf near apex.

Inflorescence simple, slender, 33 cm. high.

Peduncle plano-convex and 5 mm. broad at base, gradually becoming terete upwards; clothed with about 6 sterile-bracts, the lowest deltoid-acute, 9 mm. long, 4 mm. broad at base, thin, dirty-white, subscarios, 5-nerved, the margins of upper half with a few minute soft teeth.

Raceme 13 cm. long, 5 cm. diam. low down, subclaxly about 20-flowered, the youngest buds suberect, grey-green striped in upper third and more crowded, the older buds spreading, with the open flowers nutant and more laxly disposed (10—15 mm. distant).

Bracts lowest ovate-acute, 5 mm. long, 3 mm. broad at base, thin, scarios, dirty-white, 3-nerved.

Pedicels lowest 7 mm. long, of a deeper pink colour than the base of the perianth.

Perianth 20 mm. long, pale rose-pink (nearest coral-pink R.C.S. 13), cylindric, basally flat or exceedingly shortly stipitate, 7 mm. diam. around the ovary, thence very slightly narrowed and slightly trigonous, the throat paler to whitish, the mouth wide open; *outer segments* free for 7 mm., white, with 3 pink nerves, the apices subacute, spreading; *inner segments* free but dorsally adnate to the outer for two-thirds their length, broader than the outer, white, with 3 congested nerves throughout, the nerves deep pink turning greenish at apex, the apices more obtuse and more spreading than the outer.

Filaments lemon-yellow, filiform-flattened, the 3 inner narrower and lengthening before the 3 outer.

Anthers in turn exserted 2 mm.

Style filiform, yellow, with the *stigma* at length exserted 2—3 mm.

Ovary pale olive-green, 5 mm. long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm. diam., obtusely tapering into the style.



Fig. 1.

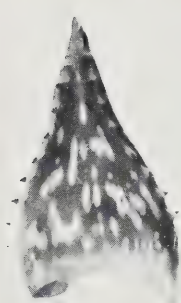


Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

Fig. 1. Plant coll. P. R. O. Bally, Gaan Libah, Somaliland Protectorate, cult. Johannesburg, fl. 31 Jan. 1953, $\times 1/3$ approx.

Fig. 2. Leaf 1/1, upper surface.

Fig. 3. Leaf 1/1, lower surface.

Fig. 4. Flower and pedicel, 1/1.